ries separated in 1950, and, in consequence, Syria regained freedom of action in directing her customs and economic policies and in managing her economy on an independent basis.

11. The new Syrian government also had to face serious internal problems, that the Mandatory power with its "Laissez-faire" policy had not attempted to deal with. No factual study of the country was made nor any determined course of economic action undertaken. The following are the most serious of the defects of the economic system at that time :

First there was a lack of statistics and detailed studies upon which to base a sound economic policy. Nor were there any technical and scientific studies of the country's economic resources, or plans for developing and exploiting them. Secondly, the banking system failed in meeting the country's need for agricultural credit and for medium and long term credit. The majority of the banks were branches of foreign banks that specialized in commercial short-term credit operations, and which, with the exception of the Banque de Syrie et du Liban, avoided seasonal agricultural lending. All the banks operated without any control or direction. Furthermore, no bank had up to that date been established to deal with industrial or mortgage credit. There was only the Agricultural Bank, established by the government to deal with medium-term agricultural loans, but its regulations, staffing and limited means did not enable it to play a major role in meeting the needs of agriculture. Thirdly there was no money market that could attract national savings and invest them in development projects. People with savings have always preferred to hoard them in the form of gold, or else they invested them in real estate. In addition, foreign capital avoided entry into the country because of restrictions on exchange, and other reasons.

12. During the period 1945 to 1953 the government made a great effort to regulate the Syrian economy in the fields of trade,[1]

1 Legislative Decree No. 14 of December 18, 1951 and its amendments concern the regulation of the possession of, and trade in, raw materials and products. Legislative Decree No. 151, of March 3, 1953 and its amendments concern company law and the law governing firms established outside Syria. Legislative Decree No. 60, of January 13, 1953 and its amendments regulate foreign trade etc.

Moslems alike whether Turks or Arabs, and being suspicious of the surrounding Kurdish and Bedouin tribes, relied on the French for protection and became a tool in their hands to oppose the nationalistic aims of Syria.

When in 1936 negotiations between France and Syria started for the conclusion of a treaty similar to the British-Iraqi treaty, French officials in Syria who were opposed to such a policy played on the fears of the Jazirah Christians and incited them to rebellion. They rose up and drove out the Syrian public employees and proclaimed Jazirah independent. They were supported by a majority of the Kurds who feared Bedouin domination in case Syria became independent, and by some Bedouin Sheiks notably the Sheiks of Tay and of Jagjag Jubur. Dham and Mizor, Chiefs of Shammar, and the Sheik of Khabur Jubur, remained loyal to the Syrian Government. The problem was solved when the negotiations in Paris failed and the French resumed their authority in 1937. All remained quiet during the war, and when Syria became independent through the intervention of the British in 1945, no one in Jazirah made any difficulty.

The population of Jazirah was estimated at the end of 1951 to be 162,000. This estimate can only be tentative because no census was taken and the number of unregistered persons is large. The Shammars are mostly unregistered and so are the Juburs. The same holds true of the Kurds who have migrated from Turkey.

The number of members in each denomination is unknown, as is the number of town dwellers. Qamishli is estimated to have 30,000 inhabitants, Amuda and Derbassiya 8-10,000 each, and Hassakeh above 10,000. Kurds probably outnumber the Bedouins in Jazirah.

14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

411 immediate family. It also provided that in adjudicating title deeds in
423 which the area derived from the indicated boundaries of the property was greater than the area mentioned in the deed, the boundaries would govern at least to the extent that they gave each member of the titleholder's family a minimum of 200 hectares. The mission urges that these provisions, which have apparently not yet been applied, be enforced as rapidly as possible. Their application would inflict no undue hardship, and would increase significantly the amount of revenue-earning state domain. Above all, it would put at the government's disposal more good land to be retained as a reserve for the ultimate settlement of landless or virtually landless peasants. Much of the land now left to the state is too marginal for successful settlement.

411 Careful management of state domain is necessary to ensure that the
423 state derives from it the maximum revenue and that land not really
427 suitable for cultivation is reserved for pasture or forest. The government is not equipped at present to exercise adequate supervision. Land is often tilled without authorization, thus depriving the government of revenue and often encouraging the cultivation of land which can be expected to produce a satisfactory harvest only in years of exceptionally high rainfall. Until cultivable land is required for settlement, it should be leased, as at present, to private operators who have the necessary machinery to till it. Thus land in the Jezireh which is recaptured under the provisions of Legislative Decree No. 135 might well be leased to those who now cultivate it, so that existing units of exploitation are not disturbed until the land is needed for distribution. However, current rentals for state land, even though they have been rising in recent years, still seem unduly low. Judging from private rental arrangements prevailing in the Jezireh, for example, the state should be able to charge an average rental of at least £S 5-6 per hectare instead of only a little over £S 3 as at present. In this way the government can add to the funds available for financing development.

Forestry and State Domain

137 The management of state domain should look also to the preservation
459 and improvement of forest areas on government land. Syria has unfortunately been almost entirely denuded of forests. Although some 448,000 hectares are listed officially as "forest", 348,000 hectares consist either of

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

wholly barren land or of range land with arboreous shrubs. Of the balance probably only about 60,000 hectares can be characterized as more or less dense forest.

The mission has already recommended an aerial survey of the forest areas in the province of Latakia. This would be a first step in the appraisal of existing resources and the delimitation and protection of forest reserves. An FAO specialist has for some time been advising the government on a forestry program. The mission can only recommend that action along the lines which he has proposed be undertaken as soon as possible. Any program should focus in the first instance on safeguarding forest areas against uncontrolled cutting, shifting cultivation, excessive grazing, fire, insects, erosion and other hazards which have inflicted considerable damage in the past. A more effective forestry law which was drafted by a committee in 1953 should be promptly enacted for this purpose. To protect the forests and supervise their exploitation a field service of four foresters and 42 rangers should be built up by 1960. The necessary forest rangers will have to be trained either at a secondary forestry school which may be established in cooperation with the FAO to serve the countries in the Near East or at a special training school which might be added to the existing Bugua Agricultural School near Latakia. Within the Ministry of Agriculture a staff of five foresters and 10 rangers should be available to direct the necessary survey, research and reforestation work; and two foresters will be necessary to supervise forest nurseries.

Once adequate protection of forests has been established, reforestation can proceed. The three existing nurseries and two new ones recently established should be able to produce about 3 million seedlings yearly. The mission considers it important, however, that government nurseries be also in a position to supply trees for planting in farming areas. Although such trees as poplars are extensively grown as cash crops in certain irrigated regions, most farming areas are virtually treeless. The planting of a belt of trees around new village settlements should be an integral part of any settlement program. Farmers should be assisted to establish their own wood lots and to plant trees along roads. This would help to meet the acute shortage of timber for fuel and building, provide some protection against wind and make settlements more attractive. The mission therefore suggests that five additional small nurseries be established, particularly in the provinces of Jezireh and Euphrates, to supply trees for such purposes.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

137 659 313 To meet the cost of this program over the next five or six years the mission suggests that additional funds of £S 500,000 be made available to the forestry service.

Settlement of State Domain

428 166 The employment of state land for the establishment of peasant proprietors is already declared government policy. Article 22 of the 1950 constitution stipulates that "The State shall distribute among landless peasants, at a small cost to be paid by instalments, sufficient land to secure their livelihood"; and decrees issued by the Minister of Agriculture on November 1, 1952 and January 15, 1953, provide for the sale of government land in parcels of 50 or 10 hectares, depending on whether the land is irrigated.

The immediate need for settlement arises from certain localized population pressures and from the growing desire of the Bedouins to adopt agri- [161] culture. Population pressures are most marked in the provinces of Latakia and Djebel Druze where, according to rough estimates, the amount of cultivated land available per person is less than 50% and a little over 60% respectively, of the average for Syria as a whole. The reclaimed land in the Ghab and the Roudj should help in particular to relieve the overcrowding among the agricultural population of the Alaouit mountains in Latakia. According to the Ministry of the Interior, the Bedouins number about 150,000, half of whom, however, are said already to be engaged in some form of settled agriculture. Many Bedouins apparently tend to squat on unoccupied land which they cultivate more or less sporadically and often with extremely poor results. For them the availability of good land in such a province as the Jezireh is of paramount concern.

423 166 241 The mission has given special attention to the problems involved in settling reclaimed and irrigated areas and of undertaking certain experimental settlements in dry-farming regions. The government has not yet drawn up settlement plans for the Ghab and the Roudj, although this task is becoming urgent, particularly for the latter. For the settlement of the Bedouins certain initial steps have been taken. The government has set aside and divided into allotments 100,000 hectares in the Radd area of the Jezireh and is in the process of dividing another area of 50,000 hectares in the same province. Part of the first area has already been allocated to Bedouins but is being leased to large operators for three years in order to

43:Simmons et al G-8 (1941-1961) 1962
M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1

sory, according to law, but barely one half of the children are now registered in schools. Outside of Damascus, the literacy rates probably do not exceed 40 per cent among the men and 10 to 20 per cent among the women. Schools are maintained by the government and by private organizations, both national and foreign. The Syrian University, in Damascus, is one of the leading Arab institutions in the Middle East. It includes faculties of law, science, arts and medicine, with subordinate departments of dentistry, pharmacy and nursing, as well as an advanced school for teacher training. An engineering school is established at Aleppo, and, in 1952, a new school for the training of village teachers, with emphasis on home economics and agriculture, was under construction near Damascus.

Vital Statistics

Due to lack of demographic data among large segments of the population, few valid statistics are available. Theoretically, the registration of births and deaths is compulsory, but in the rural areas, away from centers of population, reporting is incomplete. Government officials estimate that the accuracy of the recorded statistics approximates 90 per cent in the cities, but 30 to 60 per cent in the villages, over one half of which have less than 200 inhabitants. Considering the country as a whole, probably 50 to 80 per cent of the births are recorded and, since certificates are required for burial, a slightly higher percentage of the deaths. According to published statistics for 1948, the birth rate for the entire country was calculated at 19.1 per 1,000 population; the death rate, at 6.5 per 1,000 population. The birth rates ranged from 35.3 in the city of Damascus to 9.0 in the rural province of Al Jazira; the death rates, from 13.2 to 2.3, respectively. Evidence derived from informal surveys in different localities, however, suggests that the true birth rates average 30 to 40 per 1,000 population and the death rates 15 to 30 per 1,000 population.

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1961) 1964
M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1

844 parts of the country. The graduate pharmacists totaled 214.

DISEASES

659 Widespread discrepancies in reporting de-
165 tract from the validity of the morbidity and the mortality statistics. Among the two thirds or more of the population living in the rural villages, not only is the reporting of cases of illness and death poor, but the accuracy of diagnosis is often questionable. In a total of 15,457 deaths officially recorded in 1949, almost 35 per cent were listed as due to "ill-defined, unknown or unspecified" causes. Facilities for laboratory confirmation are lacking outside the larger population centers, and confusion is frequently evident in the differentiation of related infections. Reporting is negligible in the more remote areas, and particularly
659 among the Bedouin tribes. Except in the
165 course of special surveys, or when abnor-
758 mal epidemic conditions necessitate the enforcement of preventive measures, medical treatment is seldom accessible to the in-
659 habitants of such regions. Even in cities,
165 where the degree of reporting is considerably higher than in the rural areas, the morbidity statistics reflect a general tendency to evade the reporting of certain infectious diseases for fear of isolation. The records of cases treated in the government hospitals, which cannot be regarded as representative, and the reports of particular investigations or surveys provide the most reliable data for the evaluation of the prevalence and the distribution of specific diseases.

Diseases Spread or Contracted Chiefly Through Intestinal or Urinary Tract

164 **Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers.** Enteric fevers are endemic, and, in the opinion of the local authorities, a high degree of immunity resulting from repeated exposure to infection exists among the inhabitants.
164 Cases of typhoid fever occur throughout the
364 year, with the peak of incidence usually between June and December, when the con-

the Qoubour el Bid section of the Al Jazira, along branches of the Khabour River northeast of Hasetché. *Schistosoma haematobium* is the only species identified in confirmed cases, but rectal complications are sometimes recorded. At present, the disease is confined to circumscribed foci, but in view of the irrigation and the agricultural potentialities of the region, its control is of major public health significance. The foci are apparently of recent origin. Whether the infection was introduced by Senegalese troops stationed in the vicinity, as claimed by the local inhabitants, or by nomadic tribes from Iraq is a matter of conjecture. Surveys have been made within recent years, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and co-operating international organizations, and, although some discrepancies are evident in the determination of the infection rates in different villages, all emphasize the seriousness of the problem. Competent local authorities estimated in 1951 that the total incidence in that year approximated 12,000 cases.

In surveys undertaken in 1948,[34] the examination of urine samples collected from 545 persons in Qoubour el Bid and neighboring villages on the Gerahi branch of the Khabour River indicated general infection rates of about 62 per cent. They averaged 73 per cent among the men and the boys, and 49 per cent among the women and the girls. Moreover, they were consistently higher, in both sexes, in individuals under 20 years than in the older age groups. Equally high infection rates were found among the seminomadic peoples in the Tell Abiad area. A system of spot checking suggested probable infection rates of almost 100 per cent among males and of 60 per cent among females in 3 of the 5 villages visited.

A more exhaustive investigation in 1950[35] revealed the presence of infection among about 24 per cent of the inhabitants of 58 villages situated along 4 tributary streams in the Qoubour el Bid area. The infection rates ranged from 1 to 88 per cent: the most

63:Simmons et al G-8 (1941-1951) 1954
M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1

highly infected villages were situated on the Gerahi and the Soublakh wadies. Similar surveys in 9 villages in the Tell Abiad area showed an average infection rate of 77 per cent, with the greatest prevalence in the villages on the Tell Abiad and the Slouq branches of the Belikh. Infection is apparently acquired early in life through swimming, washing or other contact with streams inhabited by infected snails. The intermediate host, *Bulinus truncatus*, has been collected from several localities.

Two mobile treatment teams were operated by the Ministry of Health in the infected areas in 1951. Plans for the inauguration of a snail eradication program were also under consideration.

Other Helminth Infections. Infection with one or more varieties of intestinal worms is prevalent in all parts of the country. The insanitary habits of the people and the frequent use of night soil as fertilizer promote the spread of the different species. Ascariasis is widely distributed. Infection rates ranging from 30 to 86 per cent have been demonstrated in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs and Hama, as well as in the surrounding villages. The infection is most prominent among the children, in both urban and rural areas. Trichuriasis is also widespread, but enterobiasis and strongyloidiasis tend to be sporadic.

Taeniasis is common. The beef tapeworm, *Taenia saginata*, is enzootic among the cattle, and the popularity of raw, or underdone, meat in certain national dishes is responsible for considerable human infection. The pork tapeworm, *T. solium*, is sometimes encountered among the Christian communities. Occasional infections with the dwarf tapeworm, *Hymenolepis nana*, are observed in most districts.

Hydatid disease is not unusual. *Echinococcus granulosus* is enzootic among dogs, sheep, goats, cattle and camels. In studies reported in 1936,[49] cysts were detected in 25 to 30 per cent of the sheep and the goats examined in slaughterhouses in Aleppo, Damascus and Homs. Infection was uni-

p. 151(A)

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD 1

versal among the 15 camels slaughtered in the same period, but the consumption of camel's meat is normally restricted to small groups of the population. 232 164

Rare cases of trichinosis are reported among the Christian peoples. Canine infections with the fluke, *Heterophyes heterophyes*, are numerous, and one instance of infection in man has been recorded. 164

Brucellosis. Brucellosis is enzootic among the goats and the cattle. Sporadic cases of undulant fever, caused by *Brucella melitensis*, occur in man. However, infection with *Br. abortus* has not been reported. According to local custom, milk is seldom used without boiling, but infection may result from the consumption of contaminated cheese or butter, as well as from contact with infected animals. 232 164 262 252 164

Diseases Spread Chiefly Through the Respiratory Tract

Tuberculosis. The reporting of tuberculosis is not compulsory in Syria, and the prevalence of the disease is not accurately known. On the basis of mortality statistics for 1947 and 1949, about 1.8 to 2.0 per cent of the total recorded deaths were due to tuberculosis. The usual discrepancies in reporting are exaggerated, however, by the tendency to conceal the presence of tuberculosis because of the social stigma attached to the disease. From 80 to 90 per cent of the known deaths were attributed to pulmonary infection, but nonpulmonary forms of tuberculosis are common in most areas. Competent local authorities estimated that there were at least 32,000 cases of tuberculosis in the country in 1951, representing a morbidity rate of about 10 per 1,000 population. 164 165 164 183 164

In the survey carried on in Damascus in 1950, tuberculin tests were performed on 10,695 individuals between 6 and 24 years of age. The positive reaction rate rose progressively with age: 12 per cent of 563 children, 6 years of age, gave a positive reaction to tuberculin, and 46 to 51 per cent of 1,079 persons from 16 to 19 years of age. 659 751

761 369 164 Comparative rates in urban and rural communities were determined in a series of tests on unorganized groups in the city and two adjacent farming districts. In Damascus, positive reactions to tuberculin were given by 47.7 of the boys and 40.8 per cent of the girls tested at 15 years of age. At 20 to 25 years of age, positive reactions were obtained in 86.7 per cent and 77.4 per cent, respectively; at 40 to 45 years of age, in 95.6 and 86.6 per cent, respectively. In the rural communities the positive reaction rates were consistently lower, but approached the urban levels in the older age groups. Among individuals at 15 years of age, 51.6 per cent of the boys and 27.2 per cent of the girls reacted to tuberculin in one area, and 18.1 per cent of the boys and 21.2 per cent of the girls, in another. At 40 to 45 years of age, the proportion of positive reactors averaged 80 per cent in the first series and 50 to 100 per cent in the second.[48]

744 751 747 Within recent years the Ministry of Health has embarked upon a tuberculosis control program. In January, 1950, a tuberculin testing and BCG inoculation campaign was organized under the auspices of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and associated organizations, which was taken over by the Ministry in September. Surveys have been carried out in most of the provincial capitals and surrounding rural districts, and the Ministry contemplates the gradual extension of the campaign to cover the populations in all parts of the country. In the course of the investigations completed in 7 provinces between January and September, 1950, almost 417,000 persons were tuberculin tested, and over 188,000 were inoculated with BCG vaccine. The majority were schoolchildren, although miscellaneous population groups of all ages were also included. The proportion of positive reactors in the different provinces ranged from 23 per cent in Jebel ed Druz (As Suwaydah) to 42 per cent in Aleppo.

659 361 751

758 743 The diagnostic and the treatment facili-

of rabid dogs, but wolves, hyenas, jackals, rats and other animals are sometimes implicated. Prophylactic treatment is provided by the Ministry, and a special division for the preparation of antirabic vaccines is incorporated in the central laboratory in Damascus. From 140 to 250 persons were treated annually in the 4 years 1948-51.

Other Infections. Tetanus is endemic, and occasional cases are observed. Anthrax is enzootic among the sheep, and human infections sometimes occur in the agricultural areas. Sporadic cases of Weil's disease are reported.

Diseases Spread by Arthropods

Malaria. Malaria is a disease of major public health and economic importance, since it is endemic or hyperendemic in all populous sections of the country. The prevalence of the disease is directly related not only to the physical geography of the different regions, but to the degree and the type of cultivation. The most seriously affected foci are the plains around Damascus and Aleppo, the Orontes valley from Hama to the Turkish frontier, the irrigated zones bordering the Belikh and the Khabour rivers and their tributaries, and the swampy districts of Hauran province. Universally high infection rates are experienced during epidemic years, even in areas of low endemicity.

No large-scale surveys have been attempted, but accumulated studies provide rough estimates of the extent of infection in localized areas. Prior to the development of a program for the control of malaria by the Ministry of Health and the Near East Foundation in 1949-50, the spleen index among children under 10 years of age in the villages around Damascus ranged from 40 to 80 per cent, with the highest rates in villages on the periphery of the Outaybeh swamps in the eastern part of the oasis. In the vicinity of Homs, the spleen rates normally average 50 to 70 per cent.

In the course of joint surveys made by the malariologists of the United Nations

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees and the Ministry in the Khabour and the Belik river basins in 1950,[8, 9] blood examinations were performed on small representative samples of the population. All age groups were included, although the majority of persons tested were under 15 years of age. The parasite rates averaged about 33 per cent in villages in the Belikh valley, while in the areas under perennial irrigation along the Khabour River and its tributaries, they varied from 33 to 94 per cent. In the rain-irrigated districts northeast of Hassetché, the rates declined to from 12 to 16 per cent. In many localities the malaria problem has been aggravated by the introduction of rice cultivation. In some, as in Ajaja, cultivation had to be abandoned, and in others, it is prohibited within a 2-mile radius of the villages.

The malaria season extends from April to November, with peaks of prevalence in July and October, but some transmission occurs throughout the year in most malarious regions. The relative proportion of *Plasmodium vivax* and *P. falciparum* infections varies according to the season and from place to place. *P. vivax* is usually responsible for 75 to 80 per cent of the cases of malaria in the Damascus area. *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax* were identified with about equal frequency, however, in the 1950 surveys in the Belikh and the Khabour valleys. In general, *P. vivax* predominates during spring and early summer, but is superseded by *P. falciparum* toward the end of the malaria season. *P. malariae* infections are rarely encountered.

Malaria control measures are undertaken by the municipal authorities in Damascus, Aleppo and a few other towns. Control programs, based upon residual spraying with DDT preparations or Gammexane, are conducted in towns and villages in limited areas by the Ministry of Health, often in conjunction with other agencies. In 1950, they covered villages in Damascus and Hauran provinces, the town of Latakia and a few localities in Jebel ed Druz. The most exten-